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Evaluation of the small grants programme on the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People under the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

During the meeting of the advisory group for the small grants programme of the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues held in May 2011, it was recommended that a study be conducted to: (a) provide an assessment of the impact and the good practices identified from projects; and (b) provide guidance to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues with respect to the criteria for applying for small grants financed through the Trust Fund.

The present study, which considers the projects that were financed between 2006 and 2011, finds that the small grants programme, established to support implementation of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2015) under the Trust Fund, has effectively enabled indigenous peoples from around the world to positively contribute to the achievement of the goal and the objectives of the Second Decade, either through actions taken by indigenous peoples themselves or by influencing policies or policy processes that affect them. The policy impact of the projects financed by the small grants programme has been evident at the local level, where it matters the most, which is a great achievement considering the limited amount of funds and the significant time it takes to implement the projects. Increased awareness about indigenous peoples' rights and strengthened indigenous peoples' organizational capacity were also identified as positive effects of the small grants programme. This is a success in terms of outreach and a major contribution to policy development and implementation.

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I. Introduction

1. Established by General Assembly resolution 57/191 and in accordance with Assembly resolution 59/174, the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues provides funds to the small grants programme for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2015) to promote, support and implement the objectives of the Decade. In the framework of the small grants programme, priority is given to projects focusing on the areas of culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development, which were identified in the Programme of Action for the Second Decade (see A/60/270, sect. II). The Trust Fund is financed through voluntary contributions. The Bureau of the Permanent Forum also acts as the advisory group for the small grants programme, whose members hold a meeting each year prior to the session of the Permanent Forum in order to examine the projects and provide advice on their selection and on the allocation of grants.

II. Methodology

2. For the present study, narrative reports on projects that were financed between 2006 and 2010 were reviewed in terms of project performance; the reports on projects financed in 2011 are not yet available. Assessing the projects included looking at the following aspects:

(a) Whether the project's objectives corresponded with the objectives of the Second Decade;

(b) Whether the objectives and the expected results of the projects were clear and specific;

(c) Whether the narrative reports on the projects included information on the achieved results (not only the expected results) and the lessons learned, from key factors of both success and failure.

3. In order to assess whether the projects strengthened indigenous peoples' role in policy development at the country level, a number of criteria were identified, including:

(a) Whether there was a shift in the norms relating to indigenous peoples' rights;

(b) Whether the organizational capacity of indigenous peoples was strengthened;

(c) Whether the alliances between indigenous peoples and other groups were strengthened;

(d) Whether there was strong support for indigenous peoples' concerns;

(e) Whether there was an improvement in policy development for indigenous peoples;

(f) Whether there were improvements in indigenous peoples' personal, social, physical and political conditions, and whether such improvements were specific to any particular section of the community, for example indigenous women, youth, etc.

4. In addition to looking at the general, overarching factors identified in the narrative reports, assessing the projects meant looking at specific aspects such as innovation, the potential for replication and/or scaling up, sustainability, ownership, gender balance and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In addition, the current modus operandi of the small grants programme and knowledge management and resource mobilization arrangements, including for fundraising, were reviewed.

III. Project performance

A. Correspondence between the objectives of the project and the objectives of the Second Decade

5. The goal of the Second Decade is the further strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples in such areas as culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development, by means of action-oriented programmes and specific projects, increased technical assistance and relevant standard-setting activities (see General Assembly resolution 59/174, para. 2). The objectives of the Second Decade are contained in the Programme of Action for the Second Decade (see A/60/270, sect. II), which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/142, in December 2005.

6. The above-mentioned areas of the Second Decade (culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development) have been addressed through the small grants programme since its inception. Most of the projects funded by the programme have focused on strengthening the status of indigenous peoples as rights-holders, including by increasing their knowledge about claiming their rights, for example with regard to education, the empowerment of indigenous women and youth, the protection of biodiversity and the environment and issues relating to mining indigenous lands. In most projects, indigenous leaders and representatives were involved through the local community leadership and/or through relevant indigenous peoples' organizations, including women's and youth organizations. Hence, a majority of the projects were aligned with the following objectives of the Second Decade:

(a) Promoting non-discrimination and inclusion of indigenous peoples in the design, implementation and evaluation of international, regional and national processes regarding laws, policies, resources, programmes and projects;

(b) Promoting full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in decisions which directly or indirectly affect their lifestyles, traditional lands and territories, their cultural integrity as indigenous peoples with collective rights or any other aspect of their lives, considering the principle of free, prior and informed consent;

(c) Redefining development policies so that they are equitable and culturally appropriate, including in respect of the cultural and linguistic diversity of indigenous peoples.

7. Most of the sampled projects scored above average in terms of the alignment between their objectives and the objectives of the Second Decade. Some projects

focused on interventions for improving indigenous peoples' livelihoods, for example by providing vocational training in areas such as agriculture, subsistence farming and making films about indigenous cultures and traditions. Overall, the projects funded under the small grants programme generally corresponded with the objectives and contributed to the achievement of the goal of the Second Decade. At the same time, because these projects were implemented at the local level, they did not reach the top governmental circles, in other words the main decision-making areas for policy development and implementation. On the other hand, the projects were able to influence policy development at the local level, among local community members and local authorities, and therefore were still making a big difference.

8. While it is not realistic to expect small grants of less than $10,000 to achieve revolutionary, high-level policy changes, it should also be noted that some innovative and unusual projects were able to achieve great impact in spite of their smallness. These projects could be showcased as innovative approaches that might be replicated in other places, be treated as lessons learned or be an example of which ingredients are needed for a project to be successful (see para. 14 below for a list of key success factors identified for such projects). Moreover, the impact of such projects reaches, or can reach, far beyond the objectives of the Second Decade.

9. One such exemplary project strengthened indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, resulting in the resolution of tribal conflicts that would otherwise have been detrimental for the communities involved and could have resulted in the loss of human lives and resources. Another project successfully raised environmental awareness through an art competition, thus achieving the preservation of culture and the dissemination of information among participating communities. Yet another project was successful in bringing key policy players to the table to discuss the impact of mining in indigenous territories; this initiative was also well covered by the media. A fourth project was able to revitalize interest in developing traditional crops that had almost become extinct in a certain region owing to competition from commercial crops. Because the grants are small, the sustainability of projects cannot be guaranteed, but it is clear that there are influential, innovative, exemplary and replicable projects within the portfolio of the small grants programme.

B. Clarity and specificity of objectives and expected results

19. In some project proposals the objectives and expected results were clearly formulated and specific while in others they were not specified. Although it was clear in the proposals what the projects were supposed to achieve, in the vast majority of cases the objectives were — from a strictly results-based point of view — not formulated clearly. There were the following recurring issues in this respect:

(a) The project objectives were formulated as activities (e.g. "awareness campaign to educate people on the importance");

(b) There were too many objectives (some proposals mentioned 6-10 objectives to be achieved);

(c) The objectives were not as specific as they could have been (e.g. "promote the active participation of indigenous women" or "build the capacity of community structures").

11. Similar remarks can be made with regard to project proposals that included expected results. However, it should be noted that these are very common issues in project formulation, particularly if the project proposal was developed by a small indigenous organization with limited experience in writing such proposals. This situation is certainly not unique to the small grants programme.

C. Results achieved and lessons learned

12. In 90 per cent of the projects, the expected results were achieved. It can be challenging to conclude that results have been achieved if the objectives are not stated clearly in the project proposal and if the projects are assessed by those implementing the projects. Fortunately, in most project proposals the expected results and objectives were set out clearly. In general, a genuine effort was made to complete the project reports, which also included, in line with the reporting requirements, information on which results had not been achieved and why.

13. Below is a list of the recurring key success factors and key failure factors that were reported in the project reports and were considered to have played a role in the project outcome (paras. 14-16). The words "success" and "failure" are used here because they are common in project management terminology, not to denote that a project was a success or a failure overall. The factors listed below can be regarded as lessons learned at the project level.

Key success factors

14. The following key success factors (listed in no particular order) could, in general terms, be distilled from the project reports:

(a) Conscious attention is paid to adapt to local circumstances and cultural appropriateness (e.g. workshops were organized in a certain village so that the participating women did not have to be brought to a more central location; village leaders were visibly involved in project activities);

(b) Institutional mechanisms are designed and put in place (a local committee was established and put in charge of project activities; existing local mechanisms, such as a local women's organization, were utilized for advocacy and awareness, in turn providing support for the institutionalization or formalization of such existing mechanisms by, for example, establishing local community student organizations);

(c) Project activities are incorporated into ongoing processes or designed as a follow-up to previous interventions, thus reinforcing or supporting existing processes rather than introducing completely new ones;

(d) Key policymakers (e.g. politicians, regional administrators, influential village leaders, traditional authorities or community organizations) are well targeted;

(e) There is a strong focus on partnership-building and networking, thus ensuring a broader impact and a greater awareness of project results, as well as a

greater chance that activities will continue beyond the project's duration (more sustainability);

(f) The language used is easily understood and/or is an indigenous language;

(g) Appropriate strategies and activities that are suitable to the target group are used (this factor is particularly important in the case of youth);

(h) Activities are specific and focused, making their implementation straightforward (the reverse was not necessarily true: activities that were described in broad terms did not automatically lead to the unsuccessful implementation of the project);

(i) A flexible approach to implementation is taken to respond to changing circumstances;

(j) A clear and consistent methodological approach is used (those developing the projects knew exactly how and why activities were undertaken and what could be expected in terms of next steps);

(k) Project objectives are clear and achievable (some projects did not achieve objectives that were formulated too broadly or were simply not realistic in the framework of a small grants programme-funded project);

(l) The target group is small, a factor that is obviously very dependent on the type of project and the desired outcomes;

(m) Those implementing the project are enthusiastic and dedicated; while the level and value of the constructive energy mobilized around a project cannot be described precisely, such energy is nevertheless one of the greatest, if not the greatest, contributor to success;

(n) The projects are implemented by indigenous peoples who know their communities and the local circumstances and have access to certain internal structures or processes (this is an overriding or cross-cutting success factor).

15. The success of a project does not depend on any one particular success factor. The context in which a project is implemented is generally of great importance, and the above-mentioned list of success factors can be useful in guiding project design and implementation in specific circumstances. Many projects were successful despite the absence of typical success factors, at least according to the information provided in the project reports. Not all reports provided sufficient detail to identify success and failure factors, or their exact nature.

Key failure factors

16. Factors contributing to failure were not always explicitly described and instances of failure were not often included in the reports; at most, challenges to or problems in implementation were mentioned. The following factors are indicative of challenges that have been reported and from which lessons can be learned in designing and implementing similar projects:

(a) The budget is insufficient. This was a recurring issue in various projects. In some cases, the actual problem was fluctuations in in-country prices (e.g. increased transport prices, often in association with fluctuating exchange rates); in other cases, the activities had been underbudgeted or too many activities had been

planned in relation to the size of the approved budget. Some projects received fewer funds than had been asked for. In some instances, the project designer decided to involve more participants or communities because of a high level of interest. In other cases there was a shift in activities after the project had already been approved;

(b) Project implementation is delayed. Initial delays were reported owing to the late transfer of project funds. Delays during project implementation occurred for a variety of reasons, including in-country conflict situations;

(c) Tensions exist between the indigenous peoples involved in a project and the Government, leading to delays in project implementation or an inability to undertake certain planned activities because of the situation of conflict;

(d) There is insufficient time for implementation.

IV. Impact of projects on policy development and implementation

Shift in norms related to indigenous peoples' rights

17. Overall, the projects had a positive impact on indigenous peoples' rights; this was evident in at least three quarters of the projects. As mentioned above, such impact could be in the form of increased awareness, increased agreement on the definition of a problem, changes in attitudes, changes in the salience of an issue or changes in public behaviour. Most of the projects aimed to raise awareness about the rights and interests of indigenous peoples, which indicates that there is an enormous need for further awareness-raising among the general public and within indigenous communities and societies on indigenous peoples' rights and issues.

18. The projects targeted policymakers through various means, for example through workshops in which policymakers participated or had the project results presented to them, press releases, public events and mass media products including video productions, art and other cultural expressions. Involving youth was also a recurring strategy. In various project reports it was indicated, either explicitly or indirectly, that policymakers were not only Government officials, but also community leaders or tribal chiefs, schoolteachers, health-care workers and the staff of private companies. These institutions were all targeted for policy change in a bottom-up approach adopted at the local community level.

19. Another strategy designed to cause a shift in norms was to provoke changes in attitude. This was obvious in projects aiming to prevent HIV/AIDS and promote condom use, as well as in projects related to the value of certain cultural practices and traditional knowledge. Some projects focused on reducing discrimination against and the stigmatization of indigenous or tribal peoples, a major or overriding concern for many.

Strengthened organizational capacity

20. The project reports indicated that strengthening the organizational capacity of indigenous peoples was a high priority. Some projects strengthened organizational capacity through the traditional means of training staff. Many projects paid particular attention to institutional strengthening, for example through the establishment or revitalization of communities or indigenous peoples' organizations,

the establishment of networks across communities or regions and the conclusion of institutional agreements for such activities as regular dialogue opportunities with other organizations and institutions, including Governments. A few projects aimed to strengthen institutions by focusing on their communications potential, for example with regard to access to Internet facilities.

21. An indirect consequence of project implementation that was reported to have occurred in some projects was the enthusiasm to continue working on the project or on issues that emerged during or even after implementation. Another aspect that is inherent to any project is the strengthening of an organization's capacity to manage such projects. Many indigenous organizations have to rely on donor funding to implement their activities; the project cycle management itself, which starts with proposal writing and ends with reporting and evaluation, is often perceived as a barrier to accessing development funding. It is easier to implement a relatively small project, which contributes to an increase in confidence and skills in project management.

22. It can therefore be concluded that the small grants programme has contributed substantially to strengthening the organizational capacity of indigenous peoples, which is considered an important factor for indigenous peoples as it enables them to influence and advocate positive policy changes for their communities.

Strengthened alliances

23. Only half of the projects were involved in strengthening alliances. Most alliance-building was evident at the local community level, through the networking that occurred between those implementing the project and local community, women's or youth organizations. In some cases, collaboration between neighbouring villages increased, as did exchanges between representatives of different communities. Although a few projects paid specific attention to establishing functional and institutional networks or alliances with policymakers, alliance-building was not a major priority in most cases. Attention was paid to establishing relations, but more in the sense of awareness-building and influencing policies or opinions and less in terms of networking and collaborating on issues. This might have to do with the generally marginalized position of indigenous peoples in many countries, where there is limited trust in and contacts with outsiders.

Strengthened base of support

24. A significant number of projects sought to strengthen support for indigenous peoples' issues, in particular by raising awareness of the issues among relevant actors. Although not expressed explicitly in the project reports, it was clear that in various cases those implementing the projects had identified crucial actors to be involved in the project. As a result, there was a broadening of support for the issues at hand among actors that would otherwise not have been involved, including combatants in situations of conflict and elders and healers involved in projects with a cultural focus. The increase in support can certainly be regarded as an important positive outcome of projects implemented by the indigenous peoples involved.

Improved policies affecting indigenous peoples

25. It was reported that only slightly more than half of the projects had a positive impact on policies affecting indigenous people and that the impact itself was also only moderate. Impact was measured in terms of agreements with policymakers (a group that, as mentioned, was understood to include local community leaders, politicians and company representatives), resolutions of workshops, media articles, research publications or, in rare cases, even legislative products. In most cases, the impact was at the local or intermediate level, for example involving local community leaders, regional administrations (e.g. municipal or district authorities) or specific institutes (e.g. educational or health departments). Some projects had components related to dialogue with national Government officials. Policy impact, however, does not manifest itself only through direct change but also through indirect changes as already mentioned.

Changes in socioeconomic conditions

26. The projects contributed to achieving direct changes in socioeconomic conditions, with an above-average assessment for achieving change and almost three quarters of the projects reporting such change. An improved understanding and awareness of the rights and perspectives of the peoples or groups involved (e.g. women and youth) accounted for most of the change, while improved education for indigenous children also stood out as a frequent intervention strategy for improving social conditions.

27. Overall, an assessment of the policy impact of the projects financed from the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues indicates that most of the projects have had a positive impact on policies affecting indigenous peoples, whether through a shift in norms (particularly changes in awareness or attitudes, both of which emerged as strong priorities in a large majority of projects), strengthened organizational capacity, strengthened alliances and partnerships and improved collaboration, strengthened support for indigenous peoples' issues, in particular through more media coverage, improvements in policies or direct changes in socioeconomic conditions. The impact was mostly at the local level, in other words within the local community or administrative division of the region or country (municipality, district, etc.). Few projects resulted in visible legislative changes and most of the impact can be considered as a step, albeit a significant one, in the process towards policy change.

28. It is important to repeat that a positive impact on policy occurred at the level where it is felt most directly, namely at the community level, among local community members and local authorities and involving local policies, thus making a significant difference in the daily lives of indigenous peoples. Moreover, policies are always the outcome of extensive processes and seldom occur in a short time, especially when they affect sensitive issues such as indigenous peoples' rights. Given the limited funding ($10,000) and duration (one year) of the projects, the small grants programme can be considered to have been successful in contributing to positive policy changes for indigenous peoples and their communities. Increased awareness (in particular on indigenous peoples' rights) and strengthened organizational capacity stand out as positive changes achieved through the programme.

V. Overarching and cross-cutting factors

29. Some recurring and overarching cross-cutting factors have surfaced from the project reports, some of which have already been discussed. These factors will be useful when considering the continuation of the Trust Fund for Indigenous Issues, including its relation to the post-2015 development framework that is currently being formulated.

30. The fact that most of the projects were implemented by indigenous peoples' organizations contributed greatly to their cultural sensitivity. A number of projects also contributed to strengthening indigenous peoples' organizations and building awareness of indigenous peoples' rights and issues.

31. A second overarching factor is the impact of the projects in relation to the size of their budgets ($10,000 is not a large sum but it is a substantial amount of money in many countries and for many organizations). The overarching conclusion is that these small projects have significantly contributed to positive changes at the local level and that they can, if they are numerous enough, lead or contribute significantly to the achievement of the critical mass needed for making fundamental changes in the lives and for the rights of indigenous peoples.

32. Several projects have taken an innovative approach and resulted in effective solutions. The lessons learned can certainly be taken into account when formulating the next strategic steps for the small grants programme of the Trust Fund. Some projects could be showcased to provide project design guidance, as they illustrate the relationship between taking such approaches and achieving post-2015 development objectives and strategies. For example, effective indigenous peoples' empowerment contributes to ensuring inclusive development and reducing inequalities, indigenous women's empowerment contributes to inclusive social development, protecting biodiversity contributes to environmental sustainability and traditional conflict resolution methods are a means of pursuing peace and security.

33. A cross-cutting factor is the aspect of gender equality. Most projects consciously involved indigenous women and in many instances actually focused specifically on them. In that respect, the projects were largely successful in achieving or promoting gender balance. Project reports were not always clear, however, on the impact of the projects on gender equality. Project implementation strategies and project reports did not include descriptions of actions taken to reduce inequalities or change power relations. This is an aspect that might need to be strengthened in future project guidance and reporting formats.

34. It was considered that many projects, at least over three quarters of the total, were suitable for "scaling up", in other words could continue to be implemented beyond their original lifetime or be replicated in other regions.

35. The sustainability of the projects was considered to be average. Fewer than half of the projects showed clear indications of being sustainable (sustainability is understood as the capability and likeliness of the project and its results to continue beyond the project's lifetime), mainly because some projects did not provide information about next steps or on whether the activities would be continued. Other projects were clearly part of an ongoing process that was already in motion or was being planned by the implementing organization.

36. Taking ownership of the project was relatively important for the implementing organizations but less so for the beneficiaries. A factor influencing this ownership issue was the way in which the project was implemented: whether with the involvement of the beneficiaries or merely with a view to providing services for the beneficiaries. The latter approach was unavoidable in most cases, simply because of the intention of the project (e.g. improving the delivery of health or educational services, providing information and raising awareness). The degree to which ownership was taken could not always be assessed from the project reports.

37. Every action of every project could be seen as contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples since all the projects focused on improving some aspect of indigenous peoples' lives and advocating their rights. At the same time, many projects consciously focused on making more-than-superficial changes in order to conform to the Declaration, as already discussed.

VI. Modus operandi of the small grants programme

38. The way in which the small grants programme functions (its modus operandi) was assessed and reviewed, including with regard to project cycle management, knowledge management and resource mobilization arrangements. Over the years, the programme has received increasingly more proposals but has been unable, due to a decrease in funding, to approve all of them (see the table below).

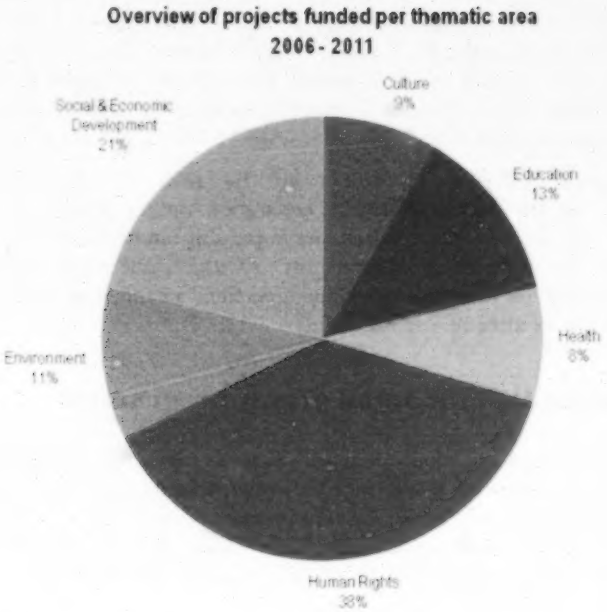
Number of projects received and approved, by year

Year	*Received*	*Approved*
2006	200	19
2007	78	20
2008	225	18
2009	120	18
2010	709	17
2011	684	15
2012[a]	1 044	

[a] Project proposals submitted in 2012 are yet to be reviewed by the advisory group for the small grants programme.

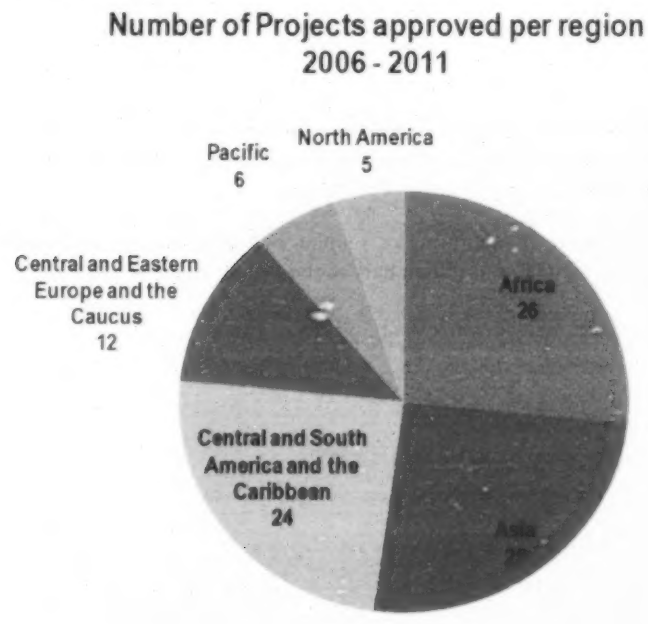
39. In terms of the main thematic areas, human rights and social and economic development were the focus in more than half of the projects (see figure I).

Figure I
Funded projects, by thematic area



40. As for the geographical distribution of the funded projects, Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for approximately one quarter of the total (figure II).

Figure II
Funded projects, by region



Criteria and requirements for awarding a small grant

41. The current administrative requirements with which project proposals must comply are the following:

(a) Projects must have an implementation period of no more than 12 months;

(b) Each project will receive a maximum of $10,000;

(c) The full project proposal is to be submitted in the predefined format;

(d) Applying organizations must have legal status (granted at the local, regional or national level);

(e) A copy of the applying organization's legal registration must be submitted;

(f) The applying organization must submit its by-laws;

(g) The applying organization must submit its organizational profile;

(h) The bank account used by the applying organization must be in the name of that organization;

(i) Certification of free, prior and informed consent from the indigenous peoples involved in the project must be provided; consent can be documented through a signed letter from the traditional leaders or representatives of the indigenous community that must include their name, position and contact details;

(j) The budget must be submitted in United States dollars;

(k) An activity plan (workplan of implementation) must be submitted.

42. These requirements are standard for many grants programmes; they are also straightforward, easy to understand and comply with United Nations regulations. The format for the proposal is also not complicated. However, specific attention could be given to the section on the expected results in the proposal format in order to evaluate projects more effectively.

43. To apply for funding through the small grants programme it might be necessary for indigenous peoples' organizations to obtain some form of legal status in accordance with national legislation. This may be a problem because some organizations might not have the capacity to apply for legal registration. Some other organizations might not wish to register as a legal body under national legislation because they have traditional structures, are governed by indigenous peoples' form of self-determination and therefore do not want to be subjected to national legislation that could, for example, dissolve such a legal entity. Nonetheless, the need for legal status is an understandable requirement of the United Nations, as it allows indigenous organizations to enter into a funding agreement with it.

44. Non-compliance with the requirement of having a bank account in the name of the applying organization has been reason for rejecting applications in a few cases. In some cases organizations did not have their own bank account because they had been using the account of an individual or another organization or because they had been subjected to undue monitoring or control of their finances and funding sources.

45. Lack of proof of the consent of the beneficiaries is another reason why some proposals could not be approved. In a few cases it was explained that the

beneficiaries were also involved in implementing the project. In many cases, however, no explanation was given for why the applying organization did not fulfil this requirement.

46. Overall, the requirements (substantive and in terms of documentation) are appropriate for this type of small grants programme. It would probably not be effective or efficient to add other stringent administrative requirements, such as those that would be applicable for the disbursement of large grants, and no further recommendations are made at this time for changes to the current requirements.

47. Over the years that the small grants programme has been operating, the eligibility and selection criteria have evolved and become more comprehensive.[1] If the administrative requirements set out in paragraph 41 above are fulfilled, project proposals are evaluated on the basis of the following questions (the substantive criteria):

(a) How well does the project fall within the thematic areas of the Trust Fund?

(b) Is sufficient information provided on the project?

(c) How systematic or logical is the connection between the objective of the project and the strategy and activities?

(d) Does the project demonstrate a participatory approach and evidence of free, prior and informed consent?

(e) Will the processes initiated by the project maintain a certain degree of vitality and remain in effect after the project period?

(f) To what degree does the budget reflect the actual activities to be implemented in the project, and are the two consistent?

48. Both sets of criteria (administrative and substantive) could be considered as objectives rather than as standard criteria for such small grants schemes, and do not need to be revised, although some slight changes to the wording might be needed for scoring purposes. Only the following three additional suggestions are made, to improve transparency and accountability:

(a) The evaluation criteria should be mentioned in the guidelines for applicants, so that it is clear upfront how the proposal will be evaluated;

(b) If information on organizational capacity and previous experience is not a criterion for selection, this should be made explicit and added to the substantive criteria;

(c) A scoring sheet with predefined maximum scores should be developed in order to maintain uniformity.

Knowledge management

49. A very important aspect of the small grants programme is the wealth of information that is generated through the projects — not just factual information but also information on inspirational, exemplary and recognizable situations that other

[1] See the most recent version of the application form at www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Trust_fund_application_2013_EN.doc.

organizations, including indigenous organizations, can learn from or might enjoy reading about. Many situations are comparable even though they are in different parts of the world, and indigenous peoples and organizations could draw inspiration from the diverse projects financed through the programme. The process of reporting on the projects is currently a requirement being handled mechanically owing to the limited human resources available for the programme's management. If sufficient resources were available, consideration could be given to putting more effort into systematically extracting lessons learned from the reports and highlighting innovative examples (with the consent of those involved in the implementation of the project and of the beneficiaries, where applicable), for example by disseminating short project briefs or excerpts through social media platforms such as Facebook or e-mail newsletters.

50. It might also be necessary to increase synergies with other programmes, including small grants programmes, in particular those of United Nations entities such as the Global Environment Facility and the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, with regard to not only content but also financing. Such synergies could consist of exchanging information on lessons learned at the project and programme levels (including from a programme management perspective) and of providing mutual referrals regarding project proposals.

51. Judging from the amount of proposals pouring in each year from unfamiliar places and across language regions, it is clear that the small grants programme is known globally. The contact details of those submitting project proposals, whether their project is approved or not, could be included in the database of contacts of the secretariat of the Permanent Forum for future information sharing, with the submitters' consent. To that end, a question could be added to the application form on whether applicants would want to receive information in the future. Such a question could be worded as follows: "Do you wish to receive information from the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in the future?" The "Yes" box could be accompanied by a sentence clarifying that checking that box means that the Permanent Forum will include the organization's contact details in its contacts database for the purpose of sending information in the future on the activities of the Permanent Forum or related information.

Resource mobilization arrangements, including for fundraising

52. The Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues is financed through voluntary contributions; these normally come from Governments but the Trust Fund is permitted to receive contributions from other sources as well, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations, private institutions and individuals. Contributions to the Trust Fund have diminished over time, in terms of both the amount donated and the number of donors, reaching a low in 2011.

53. The need to intensify fundraising and attract more contributions has been discussed various times by the Bureau of the Permanent Forum, and efforts have been made to reach out to potential donors. In the light of the vastly increased number of applications for funds from the small grants programme and the significant impact of the funded projects, it is clear that the programme merits

evolved over the years to become a grant programme cycle that adheres to United Nations rules and procedures. The programme requires more dedicated staff or staff time and streamlined processes. It is therefore strongly recommended that a web-based database system be developed and implemented in order to facilitate the continuous management of the programme.

57. The process, from the call for applications to project closure, has evolved; it is now straightforward and not too complex for those submitting project proposals. With regard to improvements in transparency, it is necessary to make public all the criteria for approving a proposal at the stage of application so that maximum scores can be assigned to the respective selection criteria. In addition:

(a) The speed with which funds are transferred can and should be improved;

(b) Knowledge management, in particular with regard to extracting lessons learned and increasing synergies with other relevant grants programmes, including small grants programmes, can be improved;

(c) Intensified resource mobilization (fundraising for the Trust Fund) is a recognized and urgent necessity.

VII. Conclusions

58. The main conclusions to be drawn from the small grants programme of the Trust Fund are that the programme has effectively enabled indigenous peoples from around the world to positively contribute to achieving the goal and the objectives of the Second Decade, either by undertaking action themselves or by influencing policies or policy processes that affect them. The impact that the projects funded through the programme have had on policy has mostly been felt at the local level, where it matters the most, and can be considered substantial and significant given the very limited money and time available for implementing the projects. Increased awareness about indigenous peoples' rights and strengthened indigenous peoples' organizations are also positive changes that will contribute to reaching the critical mass that is necessary for upstream, sustained policy changes.

59. The sustainability of projects can be improved. Doing so will require project proponents to pay greater attention to the project design and more support from the donor community.

60. Valuable lessons have been learned through this programme; these lessons need to be highlighted and disseminated.

61. Indigenous peoples have an enormous need to have access to a programme of this kind, one that is effective in achieving its objectives. Resource mobilization (fundraising) is an urgent need, to enable the continuation and expansion of the small grants programme. Simultaneously, consideration needs to be given to strengthening synergies with other relevant funds and programmes.

62. The small grants programme could play an important role in relation to the post-2015 development framework. The Permanent Forum is the central United Nations body dealing with indigenous peoples' issues and can be instrumental in contributing to the emerging post-2015 framework and its implementation, specifically in its mandated areas: economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. Furthermore, all the projects

funded through the programme are related to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is part of the human rights' framework, and human rights are one of the fundamental principles of the development agenda. The Declaration also cuts across the four dimensions (inclusive social development, environmental sustainability, inclusive economic development and peace and security) and the three pillars (economic, social and environmental) of the sustainable development concept. Projects that will be funded through the small grants programme in the future can therefore substantially contribute to various enablers of development, as mentioned in current policy documents on the post-2015 agenda, particularly those related to governance, inclusiveness, the environment and equitable access to growth opportunities. In short, the small grants programme can be strategically important as one of the structured avenues for indigenous peoples to effectively participate and contribute to the post-2015 development framework.